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County Jails

March 14, 1994

1993-1994 Civil Grand Jury

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I. Summary

The Grand Jury examined three aspects of the jail operation:

1. Review of compliance with the annual evaluation reports of the San Francisco Department of Health, the San Francisco Fire Department, the State Fire Marshal, and the 1992-1993 Grand Jury report;
2. Progress in reducing jail overcrowding; and
3. Use of existing staff and the need for additional staff.

The Grand Jury identified environmental deficiencies in the jails, problems with the outdated system of keeping records, and jail overcrowding.

The Grand Jury recommends more efficient use of personnel. All clerical functions performed by deputy sheriffs should be assigned to clerks for an annual savings of 33-1/3 percent.

An automated intake/release system should be implemented.

The mayor, supervisors and sheriff should seek an alternative solution for the funding of a new jail to replace county jail #3 in San Bruno.

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California. Grand Jury
(San Francisco)
County jails /

1994.



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II. Background

Pursuant to the provisions of Penal Code Section 919(b) the 1993-1994 Civil Grand Jury examined the condition and management of the county's jail facilities.

County Jail #1 (Hall of Justice, sixth floor) is the main intake facility responsible for initial booking and processing of persons arrested. In addition to the intake and release activity occurring in County Jail #1, it is the main information source for phone inquiries from attorneys, the courts, probation and parole officers, other law enforcement agencies, and the public.

County Jail #2 (Hall of Justice, seventh floor) houses maximum security pretrial felony prisoners and maximum security felony prisoners awaiting sentencing.

County Jail #3 (main jail and oldest facility, San Bruno) houses medium- to low-security pretrial felony prisoners, medium- to low-security felony prisoners awaiting sentencing, and some sentenced misdemeanor prisoners who are security problems.

County Jail #7 (Program facility, San Bruno) houses sentenced misdemeanor prisoners, provides educational and vocational programs for prisoners and substance abuse counseling and referral.

At County Jails #8 and #9 (Hall of Justice under construction), the first floor was conceived and designed to act as a central intake and release area for the entire department. The second floor up through the fifth floor is a 444 bed facility originally conceived and designed to house 368 work furlough eligible prisoners, 38 sub-acute medical prisoners and 38 sub-acute psychiatric prisoners. There are six housing areas, or pods, that begin on the second floor. Each pod consists of two stories, with the second story being a mezzanine that is open to the first story. Since the jail population, as of October 1993, was at least 80 percent pre-sentence, it is unlikely that the facility will house more than one pod of work furlough eligible prisoners. The bulk of the population will most likely be pre-sentenced men and women.

The new facility may have an impact on the jail overcrowding problem and may reduce the fines paid as a result of a federal court order. There is no definite date set to open the facility, and the intake/release section is not scheduled for opening due to a lack of funding.

III. Findings and Recommendations

A. County Jail #1

Findings

- **The annual evaluation report of the San Francisco Department of Health revealed the following:**
 - i) Environmental - There were seven deficiencies listed. Deficiencies listed in the report have been corrected or measures taken to make corrections.
 - ii) Nutrition - Meals are provided by County Jail #2; See findings for County Jail #2, below.
 - iii) Medical/mental health - Operational procedures meet the regulations.
- **County Jail #1 is the main intake facility responsible for initial booking and processing of persons arrested, a manual record keeping system is used to update booking cards and record court activity.**

On occasion more than 400 transactions occur in a 24-hour period. The system is also used for telephone inquiries.

- **The booking of a person arrested is part of a semi-automated system.**

The Court Management System (CMS) has been in operation since 1974. It was conceived as an information processing system to track criminal defendants from arrest to disposition. The archaic technology does not permit capture of data necessary to effectively update records. Extensive and redundant manual operation is required to update records such as entry of court activity.

The research and development section of the sheriff's department presented a three-year master plan for a new Defendant Tracking System (DTS) to the Electric Information Processing Steering Committee (EIPSC), a committee that oversees the data processing activity of the city.

The cost/benefit analysis of the plan reflects a one time cost of \$3,505,711.00 and a hard dollar quantifiable annual savings of \$1,600,00.00 through permanent staff reductions.

- **The San Francisco sheriff's department has no civilian employees working in the intake/release section, whereas other agencies use civilian employees in their jail operation.**

For example, the Martinez Detention Facility under the jurisdiction of the Contra Costa sheriff/coroner uses civilian employees in the booking area and property room.

The booking area of the county jail is staffed by sheriff's department sworn personnel. The training for a new deputy sheriff costs from \$1,800.00 at the San Francisco Police Academy to \$8,000.00 at Los Medanos Junior College. Their entry level salary is \$37,154.00. The deputies are under a retirement plan that is contracted through the California Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) at a cost to the City and County in an amount equal to 20.9 percent of the total payroll for deputy sheriffs.

By comparison, the salary and benefits for a clerical series employee is 31 percent less than a deputy sheriff. The entry level salary for a clerk typist is \$25,454.00. Clerical employees are under the city's retirement system for miscellaneous employees at a cost to the city and county in an amount equal to 5.39 percent of the total payroll for miscellaneous employees.

- **The present booking procedure requires that police officers deliver arrestees from district police stations to County Jail #1 for processing.**

Depending on the number of prisoners being booked, inmate release activity, and the time of day, a police officer may be involved in the booking process for several hours, thereby preventing the officer from being available to perform other police duties.

- **The sheriff also provides security for all Superior and Municipal Courts except the Traffic Courts.**

Security in Traffic Court is provided by police officers handling traffic protest matters.

- **Storage of records is fragmented and maintained in several locations.**

Detainers and holds are now identified by a police letter attached to a prisoner's booking card.

Recommendations

1. Sworn personnel responsible for record keeping should be replaced with a Civil Service Clerical Class. The clerical staff would work under the direct supervision of sworn personnel.

The sheriff must assess the way departmental staff are deployed. Budget constraints can no longer allow only sworn personnel to perform duties that could be done effectively by clerical series employee.

2. Deputies replaced by clerical staff should be assigned to duties consistent with their training as peace officers and their experience in transporting prisoners. The sheriff should be responsible for picking up prisoners from district police stations. When a deputy is not transporting prisoners, the deputy should be assigned to areas specifically under the jurisdiction of the sheriff (e.g., replacing police officers assigned to a court).

3. The sheriff should install an on-line system to replace the manual intake/release procedure and establish a central records division providing easier access to inmate information.

B. County Jail #2**Finding**

- **The annual evaluation report of the San Francisco Department of Health revealed the following.**
 - i) The environmental evaluation cited 34 violations, 15 of which require additional funding to correct. Of the remaining 19 violations, some have been remedied and others are awaiting replacement parts or installation. For example, 80 percent of all showers have been replaced with stainless steel units. The remaining showers and stainless steel toilets are to be installed.
 - ii) Nutritional evaluation - All recommendations made in the evaluation have been implemented.
 - iii) Medical/mental health evaluation - Areas out of compliance are problem areas for all four jail facilities. They require administrative action. All areas of non-compliance should be addressed and appropriate action taken before next year's review.

Recommendation

4. The board of supervisors and the mayor should approve the sheriff's budget request for funds to make necessary repairs and correct the deficiencies that are violations of state regulations. The continued failure to correct the areas of non-compliance could result in costly sanctions.

C. County Jail #3

Findings

- **The deficiencies in this facility identified in prior Grand Jury reports are now more severe in their impact on the problems with this jail.**
- **The annual evaluation report of the San Francisco Department of Health revealed the following.**
 - i) Environmental evaluation:
 - Food service - numerous recurring structural deficiencies were noted, such as the inadequate and unreliable tray washing machine, lack of tray drying racks, deteriorated floors, walls, windows, inadequate ventilation, and electrical supply.
 - Stored foods are now adequately protected from plumbing leaks and mice.
 - Amount of time between the dishing up of hot meals and actual delivery should be reduced to under 30 minutes to maintain proper temperature.
 - ii) Laundry:
 - Clothing exchanges for prisoners have not met minimum standards. One of the three washers is out of order.
 - Numerous showers, windows, toilets, and water fountains need repair or replacement.
 - Five major repair jobs and equipment requests have been referred to the sheriff's budget officer and capital improvements coordinator.
 - Nine minor repairs are to be completed as the budget permits. The food service contractor has provided corrections for three major deficiencies in the kitchen.
 - iii) Nutritional evaluation:
 - All recommendations made in the evaluation were noted and implemented.

A noteworthy program has been introduced by the food service director at County Jail #3. A major restaurant through the general manager and executive chef expressed excitement in participating in the Second Chance Program, an apprentice training program for ex-offenders specializing in culinary arts skills.

The food service director is commended for her caring and positive approach in a program to help provide job opportunities for ex-offenders.

iv) Medical/mental health evaluation

- Operational and procedures meet regulations.

Recommendation

5. The board of supervisors, mayor, and sheriff should make a joint, concerted effort to seek funding for the building of a new, much-needed facility.

Based on the current financial crisis in the City and the general economic state facing the electorate of San Francisco, it is unlikely that a bond issue to replace this ancient and outmoded facility would pass.

D. County Jail #7

Findings

- **This facility makes use of a concept of management and design known as direct supervision.**

This concept was developed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in the 1970's and has been adopted by many jail administrators in the United States. The facility provides educational and vocational programs for prisoners, substance abuse counseling, and general counseling services.

The director and the staff are to be commended on the development and implementation of programs offered to prisoners.

- **The Department of Public Health environmental evaluation identified heat/ventilation and structure safety hazards, and the fire marshal's report reflected eight deficiencies.**

Work either has been completed or is in progress in correcting the deficiencies cited in the most recent reports of the Department of Public Health and of the state fire marshal.

- **Overcrowding continues to plague the jails.**

Corrective measures taken to date, such as renting cells in Alameda County, are only temporary solutions. Compliance with the Federal Court Mandate has created a drain on funds that could be used to correct some of the deficiencies in other facilities.

The high count of prisoners with detainees, holds, or federal prisoners continue to negatively impact the overcrowding problem. As of July 1, 1993, there were 2,267 prisoners in custody, and 603 prisoners had detainees or holds representing 26.35 percent of the total jail population.

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) activity remains at a high level. From June 1, 1993, to August 18, 1993, there were 150 INS pickups and 160 active holds placed on county jail prisoners.

When more than a quarter of the jail population is ineligible for jail alternative release, the ability to reduce the jail population is extremely limited.

Recommendations

6. The police and sheriff should be granted more authority to identify illegal aliens and notify the proper agency of their "in custody" status. Release of illegal aliens to INS would help in reducing the inmate population. Prisoners with detainers should be removed from the county jail at the earliest possible time for release to the jurisdiction that lodged the detainer.
7. The District Attorney should give a high priority to cases involving defendants with detainers. Early disposition of these cases would have a significant impact on the reduction of the jail population.

List of Terms

Detainer -	A writ to continue holding a person already in custody.
Hold -	A procedure to retain a prisoner in custody pending release to another agency.
Jail Alternative - Release	The sheriff's 4004 Penal Code program which places pretrial and sentenced prisoners in community residential programs.
OR Release -	Release on own recognizance.

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SAN FRANCISCO CIVIL GRAND JURY RECOMMENDS THE COUNTY JAIL
USE CIVILIAN CLERICAL PERSONNEL IN ITS BOOKING FUNCTIONS
FREEING DEPUTY SHERIFFS FOR DUTIES CONSISTENT WITH THEIR
TRAINING.

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The Civil Grand Jury notes that clerical tasks now performed by deputy sheriffs could be assigned to clerks for an annual savings of 33-1/3 percent.

Currently the entry level for new deputy sheriffs is \$37,154.00 with benefits equal to 20.9 percent of the total payroll for deputy sheriffs. By comparison, the entry level for a clerk typist is \$25,454.00 with benefits cost of 5.39 percent of the total payroll for miscellaneous employees.

The report goes on to point out that deputy sheriffs free from clerical duties could assume responsibility for picking up prisoners at district police stations allowing police officers more time to perform their police duties.

The report also urges that the county jail install an automated booking system. The existing system has been in operation since 1974 and a new system could be installed for a one time cost of \$3,505,711.00 and would result in annual savings of \$1,600,000.00 through permanent staff reduction.

Noting the failure of past bond rejections for new jail facilities, the grand jury recommends that mayor, supervisors and sheriff seek an alternative solution for replacing county jail #3 in San Bruno.

The Civil Grand Jury is made up of 19 citizens who volunteer their services for one year.



